

**Actions  
to Improve  
The Hartford Public  
Schools  
1999-2000**

State Board of Trustees for  
the Hartford Public Schools

August 3, 1999

## State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools

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Legislative charge to the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools:

- ‘ . . . to be responsible for the governance, management and fiscal operations of the Hartford school district, all in order to
- ◆ increase student achievement,
- ◆ enhance the quality, adequacy and equality of educational opportunities, and
- ◆ allocate and manage resources efficiently and effectively.’

— Connecticut Special Act 97-4

The Board of Education complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities, because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or disability, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law.

## Foreword

This year, the Hartford Public Schools will go through a transformation that will place education at the center of Hartford's cultural life.

When I arrived here in April, I immediately instituted a series of changes designed to make improvements in seven critical areas: academic achievement, financial responsibility, parental involvement, school-based management, professional development, school choice and technology. In just a few short months, we implemented Spring and Summer Power Schools, the Parent Power Institute, Reading Power Hours and more. We will continue to implement the very latest teaching strategies to increase academic performance, especially in reading and math. And now with our fiscal house in order for the first time in years, doing business with the district means streamlined financial operations, faster payments and greater savings for the district.

As we begin this first great year, we will introduce an unprecedented level of technology in the classroom that will make Hartford one of the most connected school systems in the country. No matter what a child's economic status, tomorrow's success requires that every child learns computer technology.

And finally, let us look to parent and community involvement as the barometer of our success. Together, we can raise our city beyond the stars. Hartford is on the rise.

Anthony S. Arnato  
Superintendent  
August 1999

## Introduction

The purpose of this publication is to bring together key points of all documents developed to identify and address the problems faced by the Hartford Public Schools. As such, this will become our primary reference document, consolidating the goals and objectives of earlier work without losing any of the substance, urgency or detail of the previous efforts. The documents include:

- "We Believe in Tomorrow: A Framework for the Strategic Direction of the Hartford Public Schools" (adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in June 1994);
- "Working Together for Higher Achievement in Hartford's Schools," the Hartford school improvement plan to carry out the 48 recommendations issued by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the former Hartford Board of Education in 1996-97;
- the State Board of Trustees' goals for 1998-99;
- the superintendent's new initiatives;
- Special Act 97-4, "An Act Concerning the Hartford Public Schools," and
- the recommendations of the Commissioner's Quarterly Progress Reports to date.

## Mission of the Hartford Public Schools

The Hartford Public School System must be a community of active learners which nurtures self-confidence, respect and excellence in all its members. Within such a community, all students:

- master communication, computation, analytical and problem-solving skills;
- develop their physical and artistic potential;
- acquire strong ethical values; and
- learn to act creatively, responsibly, and effectively in meeting the challenges of a diverse and changing world.

— From "We Believe in Tomorrow: A Framework for the Strategic Direction of the Hartford Public Schools" (adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in June 1994)

# Goals and Objectives

## Initiative

### 1 School and District Management and Accountability

#### Goal

To provide a governance system and administrative structure that:

- (a) supports the effective delivery of high-quality instruction and high levels of student achievement;
- (b) implements a system of supervision, evaluation and staff development that maximizes the effectiveness of all Hartford Public Schools personnel; and
- (c) ensures high levels of student and staff accountability.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (1-A) Hire a chief fiscal officer.
- (1-B) Build capacity for site-based management and shared decision making at every school.
- (1-C) Implement new Board policy manuals and monitor for revisions.
- (1-D) Complete the implementation and evaluation of the pilot of the new teacher evaluation instrument.
- (1-E) Implement use of the new supervisory evaluation instrument.

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## Initiative 1 School and District Management and Accountability (continued)

- (1-F) Train staff members to use new noninstructional systems, e.g., financial and purchasing.
- (1-G) Ensure that all school personnel are provided with job descriptions and annual evaluations.
- (1-H) Develop and implement a plan for principals to serve as educational leaders.
- (1-I) Continue to centralize selected noninstructional functions.
- (1-J) Continue to clarify and articulate the roles and responsibilities of the Board, superintendent and administrators.
- (1-K) Continue to focus collective bargaining efforts to remove barriers to student achievement.

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## Initiative

### 2 Curriculum and Course Offerings

#### Goal

To ensure a high-quality curriculum that establishes clear content and high expectations for every grade, every course and every child.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (2-A) Implement a literacy and numeracy program for all students, PK-12.
  - Continue the literacy and numeracy enhancement and test sophistication program.
- (2-B) Complete professional development on literacy and numeracy for all staff members.
- (2-C) Develop curriculum guides for all disciplines and begin to develop grade-level and course assessments of students that are aligned with the curriculum guides.
- (2-D) Provide professional development on the curriculum guides for all staff members.
- (2-E) Continue to ensure a curriculum free of bias (e.g., cultural, gender).
- (2-F) Implement plans that will result in more students demonstrating success in reading, writing, algebra, foreign languages, the PSAT, the SAT, Advanced Placement courses, CMT and CAPT.
- (2-G) Pilot new social studies and science programs in spring 2000.

## Initiative

### 3 Instruction, Assessment and School Climate

#### Goal

To create a positive climate and ensure high-quality instruction and high levels of student achievement.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (3-A) Continue to allocate and support appropriate assistance and resources to the 11 schools in the Level 1 range according to the 1997-98 Overall School Index.\*
- (3-B) Ensure continued accreditation for all of Hartford's high schools, and continue the accreditation process for the elementary and middle schools.
- (3-C) Implement a PK-8 grade-level continuous criterion-referenced assessment process in literacy and numeracy, and begin a similar process for the core academic areas.
- (3-D) Implement and evaluate the Early Success and Soar to Success Programs.
- (3-E) Publicize student performance and attendance data at the school and district levels.
- (3-F) Implement strategies to improve attendance and school climate.
- (3-G) Implement dropout and truancy reduction plans.

\* The Overall School Index (OSI) is a component of the Connecticut Title I Evaluation Model developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. It reflects progress toward the state goals across time, across the score scale, across content areas and across grades. The results of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) are used to calculate the OSI. The OSI ranges from 0-100 in bands: Level 1 (0-38); Level 2 (39-76); and Level 3 (77-100). For Level 1 schools, the adequate yearly progress is to reach Level 2 status. In 1997-98, 11 schools that administered the CMT were identified in this range: Barbour, Batchelder, Belances, Burr, M.D. Fox, Hooker, Kinsella, Milner, Moylan, Sanchez and SAND.

## Initiative

### 4 Professional Development

#### Goal

To provide all employees with high-quality professional development that supports instructional improvement.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (4-A) Develop and implement a multiyear comprehensive staff development plan.
- (4-B) Provide staff development opportunities that focus on instructional quality in reading, language arts, mathematics and all support functions.
  - Complete professional development on the literacy and numeracy programs for all staff members.
- (4-C) Continue to train administrators to serve as effective educational leaders (see 1-H).
- (4-D) Provide professional development on the curriculum guides for all staff members (see 2-D).
- (4-E) Define and provide the training needed by staff members working in distinct programs — special education, bilingual education and others (see 7-G).
- (4-F) Provide professional development on the new social studies programs (spring 2000).

## Initiative

### 5 Early Childhood

#### Goal

To provide programs and services that ensure all children come to first grade ready to learn.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (5-A) Implement the 1999-2000 preschool grant and ensure the creation of additional state-funded placements for 3- and 4-year-olds in early childhood programs.
- (5-B) Analyze and report data on 3- and 4-year-olds.
- (5-C) Develop a process to identify and register 3- and 4-year-olds for the first day of school.
- (5-D) Implement programs that provide educational materials and services to parents and young children.
- (5-E) Implement a rigorous early childhood curriculum that includes literacy, numeracy, technology, second language learning and the arts.
- (5-F) Create opportunities for preschool providers and K-1 teachers to align their curriculums.

## Initiative

### 6 Technology

#### Goal

To integrate technology throughout the instructional program and to enhance the efficiency of noninstructional functions.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (6-A) Implement the Hartford Public Schools Technology Plan adopted January 1998, as budgeted.
- (6-B) Continue to enhance the instructional and noninstructional use of technology.
- (6-C) Design a technology laboratory in every high school for the reconditioning of computers donated by corporations and other sources.
- (6-D) Distribute reconditioned computers to the community and begin to provide free technology connectivity in every Hartford home associated with a Hartford public school.
- (6-E) Implement a ninth grade laptop program in every high school.
- (6-F) Implement Jostens Learning® in all K-8 schools.
- (6-G) Implement a school-to-career technology program for high school students.



## Initiative

### 7 Student Support

#### Goal

To ensure a seamless and coordinated array of student services and support programs that provide for individual student needs and respond to the diversity of the student body.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (7-A) Open five thematic schools by September 2000.
- (7-B) Develop and implement a districtwide extended-day and extended-year program that is aligned with the regular school-year curriculum.
- (7-C) Develop "full-service" schools where comprehensive support services are available to students and their families.
- (7-D) Evaluate the impact of the charter school and magnet school options available to Hartford students.
- (7-E) Implement and evaluate the plans and/or programs to enhance alternative education, theme-based schools and career academies.
- (7-F) Improve and enhance the capacity to provide appropriate and effective accommodations for students with special needs in regular classrooms.
  - Develop a strong intervention/prevention referral protocol to improve services to general students in need of special services.
  - Reduce referrals to special education.
  - Increase the number of special education students returning to general education.

#### Initiative 7 Student Support (continued)

- (7-G) Define the distinct special education, bilingual education, alternative education and adult education programs in the district and provide needed training, resources and materials.
  - Develop a training protocol for all special education staff members.
  - Improve compliance with special education mandates.
  - Restructure the Hartford Transitional Learning Academy (HTLA) to better serve individual student needs.
  - Develop and implement a comprehensive bilingual education program.
  - Restructure the adult education program to better educate older students.
- (7-H) Recognize students for achievement, citizenship and peer assistance.
  - Develop a life skills character education program systemwide that is infused into the existing physical education and health programs and support services, e.g., guidance and social work.
  - Develop districtwide service learning programs to encourage community-based service learning project development and to continue to foster student citizenship.
- (7-I) Ensure compliance with Title IX.

## Initiative

### 8 Parent and Community Support

#### Goal

To maximize parent and community engagement with each school and the district as a whole.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (8-A) Develop and implement school-based plans for significantly increasing parent/teacher communication and parent participation in school activities.
- (8-B) Conduct school-based and districtwide activities and programs to enhance ongoing parental involvement.
- (8-C) Plan and conduct annual reading, writing and mathematics nights at every elementary and middle school.
- (8-D) Provide training for parents on strategies that can be used at home to improve their child's academic skills.
- (8-E) Focus partnership efforts on improving student achievement.
  - Improve and enhance school-based collaborations with community agencies.
- (8-F) Provide training for parents and community partners involved in extended-day and extended-year programs.
- (8-G) Provide parent education at all levels, i.e., adult basic education, high school diploma completion, GED, ESL and higher education programs.

## Initiative

### 9 Fiscal Management

#### Goal

To develop and implement a comprehensive and effective system of fiscal management for all funds and grants in the school system.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (9-A) Develop a spending plan for all funds for the 1999-2000 school year.
- (9-B) Develop a 2000-01 budget that integrates general and special funds.
- (9-C) Continue to implement a comprehensive plan of action (audit response) to improve overall fiscal management and accountability.
- (9-D) Report monthly the status of all funds, with year-end projections.
- (9-E) Develop written policies and procedures for all aspects of fiscal management.

## Initiative

### 10 Facilities Management

#### Goal

To ensure that every student will attend a safe, properly sized and properly equipped facility.

#### 1999-2000 Objectives

- (10-A) Report the findings of the comprehensive long-range facilities project and implement a comprehensive plan of action that:
  - improves overall facilities management and accountability; and
  - ensures that every student will attend a safe, properly sized and properly equipped facility.
- (10-B) Address overcrowding in schools based on enrollment projections and other information from the long-range plan.
- (10-C) Implement the facilities and educational plan for Hartford Public High School.
- (10-D) Replace school roofs and repair the most serious facility problems.
- (10-E) Improve accountability of managers and staff members through the implementation of a computerized work order and preventive maintenance system, and a proper inventory control system.

## Partners\*

Advisory Council  
 Audit Implementation Steering Committee  
 Capital Community-Technical College  
 Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)  
 Capital Region Workforce Development Board  
 Central Connecticut State University  
 Citizens' Committee for Effective Government  
 City of Hartford (Mayor, Council, Manager, Police,  
 City Departments)  
 Colleges/universities engaged in professional develop-  
 ment with Hartford staff members  
 Coordinating Council for Philanthropy  
 Hartford Areas Rally Together  
 Hartford Federation of Teachers  
 Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
 Hartford Parent Network  
 Jeter, Cook and Jepson  
 Local businesses and community organizations  
 MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce  
 New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
 (NEASC)  
 Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory  
 at Brown University

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## Partners\* (continued)

PriceWaterhouse Coopers  
 Saint Joseph College  
 School Building Committee  
 School Improvement Teams  
 School Readiness Council  
 Scully & Wolf  
 State Department of Education  
 Trinity College  
 United Technologies Corporation  
 United Way of the Capital Area  
 University of Connecticut  
 University of Hartford

\* Please note that this list of partners is not complete. These examples of resources are included to emphasize the expectation of substantial outside assistance.

## Progress to Date in Our Schools

- Student achievement, as measured by the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, has continued to improve in most Hartford schools, and exemption rates have decreased throughout the district.
- The percentage of Hartford graduates taking the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the combined SAT score averages have increased at each high school. The number of Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings, the percentage of students taking AP tests, and the achievement results have also increased at each high school. More graduating seniors have also taken other college-level courses as part of their high school program.
- A superintendent who successfully implemented a plan to increase student achievement in his former district has been appointed. The search committee was comprised of the Advisory Council and members of the State Board of Trustees. A professional search firm helped to conduct the search.
- Members of the State Board of Trustees and the administration have reviewed and revised several sections of the Board policy manual.

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## Progress to Date (continued)

- Corporate and municipal support has been provided to assist the district with a variety of fiscal and operational recommendations — updating job descriptions, Year 2000 compliance, Title IX compliance, transfer to a newer version of the joint financial system for the City of Hartford and the Board, and a new capital improvement and facilities work order process. Assistance has also been provided to support school improvement teams and principals.
- Community support through foundations, organizations, local colleges and universities and concerned citizens has been provided to improve school facilities, coordinate summer programs, tutor students, train staff members and recognize student achievement.
- The State Board of Trustees and the superintendent have redefined their roles and responsibilities.
- Almost all collective bargaining agreements have been revised to better facilitate academic reforms in the district and to reward high levels of performance.
- The superintendent's literacy and numeracy enhancement and test sophistication programs have been incorporated into the regular academic program, extended-day programs, and spring vacation and summer programs.
- Regular assessment of students' academic progress has taken place during the academic year and the district's summer program.

- A policy to end social promotion has been adopted, and assistance is currently being provided to students in need of additional instructional support, e.g., extended-day and extended-year learning opportunities.
- Professional development and instructional materials have been provided to staff members to implement the new literacy and numeracy programs. Training to integrate technology into the curriculum also has been provided.

- Comprehensive school reform models, Success for All<sup>®</sup> in particular, have been adopted at every elementary school. Administrators have received training in these models, and staff members will be trained prior to the start of this academic year. Receipt of new instructional materials and supplies has begun, again, prior to the start of the 1999-2000 academic year.

- The accreditation process began last year with six elementary schools. Bulkeley High School is fully accredited.

- Hartford's local charter schools, Breakthrough and the Sport Sciences Academy, will expand their academic programs, and two new interdistrict magnet schools will open this year — the Greater Hartford International Academy and the Trinity Science, Mathematics and Technology High School Resource Center.

- Fifty-two students from other districts are projected to attend Hartford public and charter schools this year.

- Full-day and full-year early childhood programs (to serve approximately 670 children) are currently being developed for the 1999-2000 academic year. This includes preparation for national accreditation.

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## Progress to Date (continued)

- Facilities improvements have begun to expand the instructional use of technology. Technology integration will begin this year with Jostens Learning<sup>®</sup>, a ninth grade laptop program, and other innovations.

- A Parent Summer Institute has demonstrated district-level support for parent leadership in school reform by providing parents with strategies to increase parent/teacher communication, to extend their own learning, and to assist their children with academic skills. A program will be designed and implemented this year to continue to address these goals.

- Improved financial accounting and finance operations resulted in a more informative budget development process for 1998-99, monthly financial statements provided to the State Board of Trustees that exhibit the use of general and special funds, the reconciliation of expenditures from prior years, and cost savings for the district.

- Preliminary findings from the long-range facilities project (scheduled for completion this fall) have been used to prioritize needed improvements, including 17 roof replacement and repair projects.